MANGA VERTIGO

AN EXPLORATION OF EARLY MANGA HISTORY IN THE WEST

Genocida

Foreword

In the current day, just about anyone can tell you what a “manga” is. When over half of the western comic market is made up of Japanese manga, it’s easy to understand why. These little backwards graphic novels are so ingrained in the western world that it’s easy to assume it was always like this. On the contrary, manga had a long and hard journey dating as far back as the 70’s to become the powerhouse of the market it is today.

If you know me, you know I’m a massive fan and collector of anime/manga from its early years in the west. I’m not exactly sure where to pinpoint the origin of this fascination. Maybe it was borrowing *Dragon Ball Z* from the library in elementary school or finding *Street Fighter II The Movie* on VHS at a thrift store at a formidable age, but it feels like that love has been there my entire life. With the way the anime/manga market is handled now with big names like Sony and Amazon running the game, times have changed drastically and are a far cry from the medium's scrappy beginnings. When the biggest name in anime distribution is Crunchyroll, a company initially founded on the theft and monetization of the work of passionate fansubbers, it’s hard not to be just a little nihilistic about the state of things.

To get to this point, anime and manga was first introduced to the west as a result of dedicated fans working tirelessly, making connections and fighting tooth and nail with retailers to stock the shelves with these foreign works of arts. That’s what this zine is about. The early days of manga, the people and passion involved and the slow growth to bring manga to the mainstream.

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BAREFOOT GEN

(mangas earliest origins)

As for the first Japanese manga officially published into English in the U.S., exact origins are somewhat tricky to nail down. The earliest examples seem to be very small publications that have unfortunately been poorly documented. One such story is Mitsuteru Yokoyama's *Suikoden*. Published under the name *The Loyal Bandits - From the Tales of Suiko,* this title was cut up and published as short, numbered comic strip-like stories in the buddhist magazine *World Tribune* throughout 1972 (the earliest example I could personally find was #59, published June 2nd, 1972).

▶ *The Loyal Bandits* #59
(World Tribune, June 2, 1972)

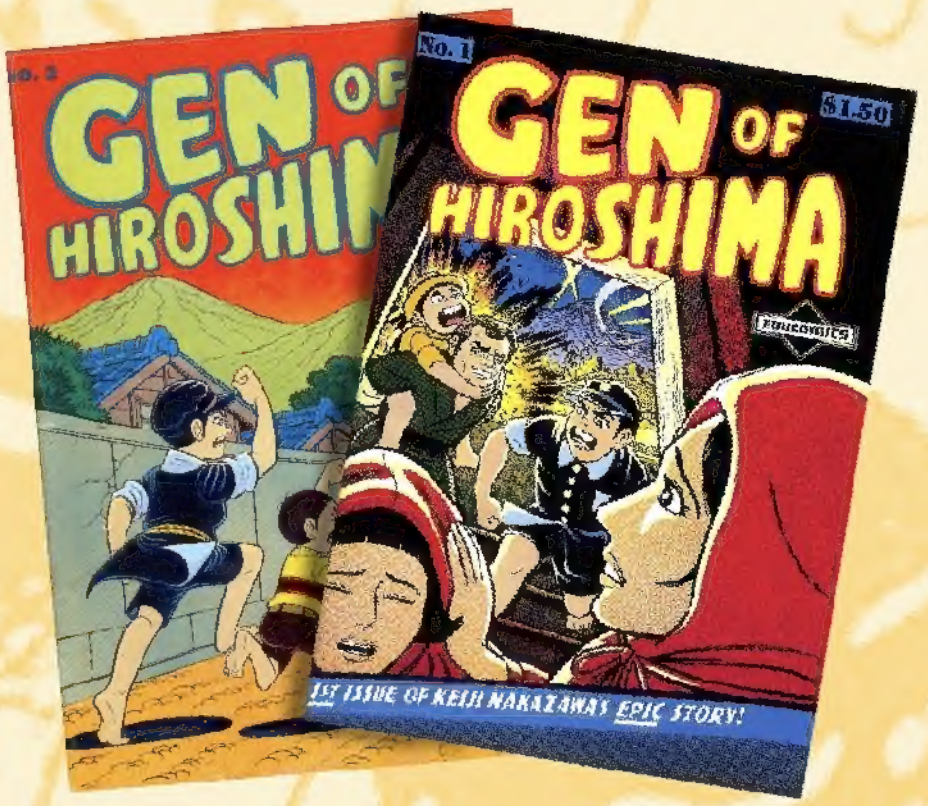
The first manga published in a proper paperback book format was Keiji Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* all the way back in April of 1978. *Barefoot Gen* is a historical story based on Nakazawa's own experiences during the aftermath of the Hiroshima bombing. This translation was helmed by the volunteer organization Project Gen, a pacifist group in Tokyo founded with the goal of translating *Barefoot Gen* to spread the book's anti-nuclear war message throughout the U.S. One thousand copies of the 284 page first volume were sent overseas and distributed by the War Resisters League in New York City.

This book would catch the attention of Leonard Rifas and his one-man business EduComics in 1980. Rifas would soon begin to negotiate the rights with Project Gen to republish their translation in comic book form. Rifas strived for comics to be used as a tool for teaching and raising social awareness, so Nakazawa's blunt and unrestrained *Barefoot Gen* was the perfect project to encourage an opposition to nuclear weapons amongst western readers.

This release, under the new title of *Gen of Hiroshima* was newly revised with redone lettering and added gray tones to the artwork to keep it in line with contemporary American comics of the time. These comics would primarily be sold in a variety of leftist bookstores in the San Francisco area, with national sales being handled through head shops (stores closely tied to the counterculture movement, specializing in drug paraphernalia), a distribution system that was on its last legs by 1980. The first print run of *Gen of Hiroshima* issue one was 5000 copies, all of which eventually sold out. Unfortunately, this would make selling remaining copies of the following issue much more difficult. Due to the large time gap between the releases of issues one and two, it was a struggle for new readers to start the story from the beginning and those that wished to read the story in its entirety simply bought Project Gen's paperback version.

Overall, *Gen of Hiroshima* saw disappointing sales and would go on to last only two issues, serializing the first 104 pages of the original story published in January of 1980 and April of 1981 respectively. Rifas would soon decide to focus his attention on a new project, that being...

▶ *Barefoot Gen* First Edition
(Project Gen, 1978)



▶ *Gen of Hiroshima* No. 1-2
(EduComics, 1980-81)

I SAW IT

...I Saw It, also by Keiji Nakazawa, in December of 1982. *I Saw It* is a 1972 one-shot predecessor to *Barefoot Gen* that also explores the aftermath of the Hiroshima bombing, with the big difference being that it is an *autobiographical* telling of Nakazawa's experiences as opposed to the fictionalized story seen in *Barefoot Gen.*

The decision to discontinue *Gen of Hiroshima* in favour of *I Saw It* was due to the fact it was an unfictionalized story short enough to be published within a single comic book issue. Since the initial goal of publishing *Gen of Hiroshima* was to bring awareness to the effects of nuclear war, Rifas viewed *I Saw It* as a more effective means of hitting the same points on a smaller and less exhaustive scale. Much like *Gen of Hiroshima,* minor changes were made from the source material, including the addition of full colour.

Although not explicitly intended for a young audience, a graphic at the end of the comic advertises a teacher's guide and lesson plan as a way of using *I Saw It* to present and teach nuclear war issues in a classroom setting.

At this point, Rifas had taken what he had learned from working on *Gen of Hiroshima* and changed his advertising strategy. Copies of *I Saw It* were mailed out to well-known people in the comic book industry and endorsements for the book were gathered at the 1982 San Diego Comic-Con. Despite the high praise it was met with, the book would unfortunately show disappointing sales. Rifas had ordered 50,000 copies, with direct shipments to independent distributors totaling a mere 2000. The comic simply failed to capture mainstream attention in the American comic book market of the time, perhaps due to its dark subject matter.

I SAW IT

Free Teacher's Guide and Lesson Plan

Educomics will send free information on how to present nuclear war issues to children and a lesson plan for using *I SAW IT* in classrooms for the asking with orders of 30 or more copies.

Free Poster

An attractive 11 x 17 inch, two-color poster advertising the availability of *I SAW IT* is yours with orders of 20 or more copies. It features endorsements of *I SAW IT* written by leading cartoonists and peace educators.

▶Teacher's Guide Advertisement

▶I Saw It
(EduComics, 1982)

© RUMIKO TAKAHASHI/SHOGAKUKAN 1988

*(Print ad for the cancelled Eclipse/Viz release of *Lum - Urusei Yatsura* dated 1988)

DARLING, I'M HERE! COME ON OUT AND PLAY.

LUM™

Urusei Yatsura
by Rumiko Takahashi

COMING IN MAY!

ECLIPSE INTERNATIONAL® + VIZ COMICS™

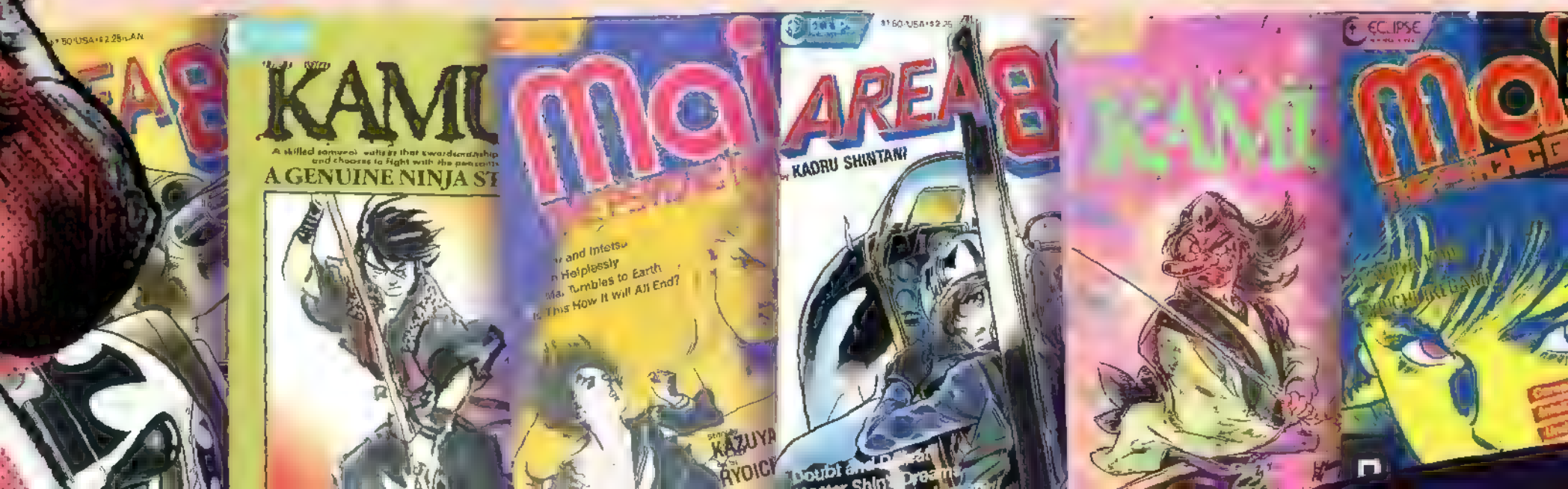
the VIZ + ECLIPSE COMICS years

Given the experimental nature of the previously mentioned publications, manga wouldn't be terribly prevalent in the west throughout the early 80s. There were occasional titles such as *Golgo 13* from Lead Publishing in 1985, but a big splash wouldn't be made until May of 1987 with three concurrent titles from Eclipse Comics in conjunction with Viz Comics, these being Kaoru Shintani's *Area 88*, Sanpei Shirato's *The Legend of Kamui* and Kazuya Kudo's *Mai the Psychic Girl.* Often erroneously claimed to be the "first" manga in the west, these three titles would be the first manga distributed wholesale, in line with many other American comic publishers at the time. All three would run biweekly in traditional western comic book format for approximately the next two years, with each wrapping up at various points in 1988 and '89. One more series would be born from this collaboration, Masaomi Kanzaki's *Xenon,* premiering later in December of 1987.

This partnership between Eclipse and Viz originated from Eclipse's desire to diversify their lineup of comics, in part inspired by the success of imported anime such as *Robotech* and *Voltron.* Viz, being a newly formed subsidiary of Japanese publisher Shogakukan, were able to provide a number of titles for publication. However, this partnership would eventually come to an end in November of 1988. The two companies allowed their contract to expire when it was clear that the sales numbers were lower than Eclipse had promised. At this point, *Mai the Psychic Girl* and *Xenon* had ended their runs and the rights for *Area 88* and *The Legend of Kamui* were transferred solely to Viz.

One more title was planned for this partnership, that being Rumiko Takahashi's *Urusei Yatsura*. Originally slated for a 1988 release, the date was pushed back to '89 and eventually cancelled outright due to "circumstances beyond [either party]'s control" despite print ads for the release being published in various comics. Unfortunately, the reasons for its cancellation remain muddy, with accounts differing between publishers.

The late 80's were a noteworthy time for other manga publishers as well. Debuting the same month as Viz and Eclipse's outings was Kazuo Koike's *Lone Wolf and Cub* from First Comics. This series is notable for featuring cover artwork from prominent western artists such as Frank Miller and Bill Seinkiewicz. Unfortunately, the series would only run for 45 issues before First Comics ceased all publication in 1991. A year later in 1988, the west would get its first glimpse at Katsuhiro Otomo's cyberpunk classic *Akira* from the Marvel imprint Epic Comics. Otomo himself played a substantial role in this publication, retouching artwork to ease the transition from its original right-to-left format to the western left-to-right standard. To make the series consistent with western comics, the decision was also made to colour the artwork. This process was handled by Steve Oliff, and is said to have played a massive role in the success of *Akira* in the west.



ECLIPSE A.V. (after viz)

VIZ A.E. (after eclipse)

Following the breakdown of the Eclipse partnership, Viz continued with the publication of *Area 88* by themselves beginning in December of 1988. Unfortunately for fans, this continuation would only last a further six issues and by all accounts, the quality took a nosedive. The release schedule was changed from biweekly to monthly, prices jumped from $1.50 to $2.00 and the covers changed from traditional artwork to real-life photographs of fighter jets, perhaps to make the comic seem less "foreign" in the western market. Viz, now fending for themselves in the American comic book market, seemed to have taken a bit to get their footing.

However, Viz trudged on and would start publishing several more titles in comic book form on their own throughout late 1988 and early '89, with some early highlights including *Crying Freeman, Nausicca* and *Urusei Yatsura.* With their wide array of licenses from Shogakuken, Viz would become a powerhouse in the western market throughout the 90's with popular titles such as *Ranma ½* and *Inuyasha* establishing manga on a widespread scale. Viz, as I'm sure you know, are still in the business today and currently stand as the biggest manga publisher in the west.

Eclipse, on the other hand, wouldn't be so lucky. After the collapse of the Viz deal, Eclipse would continue with their standard American comic book titles and soon begin to publish their own manga with help from Studio Proteus (a company we'll touch on later). Starting with Masamune Shiro's *Appleseed* in September of 1988, we'd see a handful of titles from the late 80's into the early 90's including Shuho Itahashi's *Cyber 7* and Akihiro Yamada's *Lost Continent.*

When viewed with the knowledge of the manga market today, the titles Eclipse chose to license are quite strange and really illustrate the uncertainty early publishers had of what types of manga would catch on in the west. Whereas Viz had the benefit of a larger number and variety of manga titles in the same time span due to their connection with Shogakuken, Eclipse had a less direct connection to Japanese publishers and would publish lesser-known and somewhat experimental titles like the previously mentioned *Lost Continent* that failed to leave an impact on western readers. Eclipse would publish a total of six manga with Proteus before ultimately succumbing to bankruptcy in 1994.

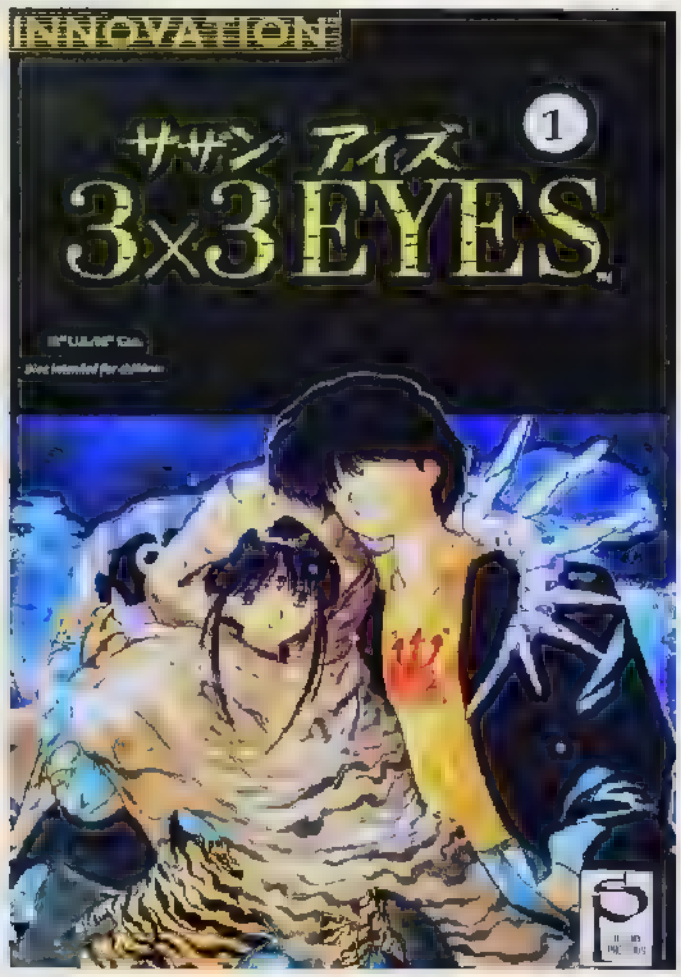
STUDIO PROTEUS

If you engaged with manga throughout the 80's and 90's then you may be familiar with Studio Proteus. If not, then you're almost certainly familiar with some of the work they've done. Studio Proteus was a San-Francisco based manga import and translation company founded in 1986 by Toren Smith. Proteus would act as a "packager" for various publishers. Basically, Proteus was responsible for licensing, translating and formatting manga for publishers, including Dark Horse Comics and Innovation Comics.

Their earliest work was actually in collaboration with Viz and Eclipse, translating the previously mentioned *Area 88, Legend of Kamui* and *Mai the Psychic Girl.* After the collapse of the Viz/Eclipse partnership, Proteus would continue their work with Eclipse independently, starting with *Appleseed* in September of 1988. Proteus would be responsible for translating all of Eclipse's manga outings, with them legally acquiring the translation rights and production materials for all their co-published manga after Eclipse's bankruptcy.

Proteus' longest-lasting relationship would be with Dark Horse, beginning with Johi Manabe's *Outlanders* in December of 1988. From this relationship, Proteus would produce an estimated 60 to 70 thousand pages of manga in their 16-year long history together. Proteus were known for their strict quality guidelines, with Smith refusing to work from anything other than the original artwork to ensure the scan quality was in-line with the Japanese originals. On occasion, Proteus would even commission original cover art from the Japanese creators. One of Proteus' most notable projects was Hiroaki Samura's *Blade of the Immortal,* published by Dark Horse. Instead of simply mirroring artwork in order to fit western left-to-right reading habits like all of their other work, *Blade of the Immortal* had its artwork unaltered and painstakingly reorganized to read left-to-right instead at Samura's request.

As the manga industry continued to grow in the 00's, Smith would decide to sell the studios publication rights to Dark Horse while still retaining the Studio Proteus name and staying on-board as a translator for various projects until 2006. Their last book published in the standard comic book format would be *Blade of the Immortal* #131 in November of 2007.



▶ *3x3 Eyes No. 1*
(Innovation, 1991)

DARK HORSE

With their success in the market lasting for upwards of four decades at this point, Dark Horse Comics should be a name nearly every western manga fan is familiar with. After their founding in 1986, Dark Horse found unexpected success with their first release, the anthology *Dark Horse Presents No. 1*. This encouraged Dark Horse founder Mike Richardson to branch out and license several properties for future publication, eventually landing the rights to the *Godzilla* franchise the following year.

Along with their own American adaption titled *Godzilla King of the Monsters* in 1987, Dark Horse would publish Kazuhisa Iwata's 1985 manga *Godzilla*, an adaption of the 1984 film *The Return of Godzilla* as a six-issue mini-series starting in July of 1988, becoming an early adopter of the medium. This was quickly followed up with *Outlanders* in December of the same year. *Outlanders* marked Dark Horse's first collaboration with Studio Proteus, with many more soon to follow.

In terms of their manga output, Dark Horse would solely focus on *Outlanders* throughout the rest of the 80's before diversifying their manga titles exponentially in the early 90's. Great success would come in 1994 with their publication of Kosuke Fujishima's *Oh My Goddess!*. Initially published as a six issue mini-series as a cross promotion with the then newly released anime adaptation on VHS before continuing as an ongoing title, this series would become a surprise hit for Dark Horse despite their initial lack of faith and would become one of the earliest examples of a manga widely popular with both male and female audiences (a feat perhaps only achieved at this time by *Ranma ½* from Viz). Being the main partner of Studio Proteus, Dark Horse would also eventually publish comics from Eclipse's manga output after the former acquired the rights to their catalog.

Dark Horse is, of course, still a successful manga publisher to this day and remains one of the few early manga publishers to survive past the comic book age. Despite only accounting for 1% of their total output, manga currently manages to make up over 60% of Dark Horse's total sales.

▶*Godzilla No. 1*
(Dark Horse Comics, 1988)

O.E.L.

—original-english-language-manga—

Another important pillar to touch on are the many American-made adaptations and OELs published during manga's infancy in the west. One of the first of these adaptations was Eclipse's *The Dirty Pair* in 1988. Spearheaded by artist Adam Warren and writer Toren Smith, this comic came about after a discussion with Haruka Takachiho, the author behind the original *Dirty Pair* novels in Japan. Warren and Smith, both fans of the 1985 *Dirty Pair* anime, wrote to Takachiho about the prospect of adapting *Dirty Pair* into comic book form, as no manga adaption existed in Japan at that point. The two were eventually given the thumbs up and published three mini-series with Eclipse from 1988-1991 totaling 14 issues. After transferring publication rights from Eclipse to Dark Horse, the series would continue for a further 14 issues until 2001.

Multimedia company Central Park Media was another prevalent name in the world of OELs. Along with their U.S Manga Corps anime division and UFO conspiracy theory website (look it up), CPM also had a press division known as CPM Comics that would produce comic book adaptations of their popular anime titles such as *Project A-ko, M.D. Geist* and *Gall Force.* Since many of these titles were stand-alone anime series with no prior manga, CPM would create these adaptations with American artists/writers that would in turn act as advertising for their accompanying videos. CPM would only adapt a handful of titles under CPM Comics and would seemingly shift their focus to directly publishing Japanese manga under the new moniker of CPM Manga.

Eternity Comics threw their hat in the ring as well after the success of their *Robotech* line of comics. Looking for other anime titles to adapt, they managed to grab the rights for Leiji Matsumoto's *Captain Harlock* as well as the *Lensman* franchise (confusingly, adapting the Japanese anime that itself was based on an American novel series). Their *Captain Harlock* series is a personal favourite not for its actual contents, but the story surrounding its release. *Captain Harlock* began in October of 1989 after Eternity had licensed the series from Florida-based company Coral Pictures. The issue? Coral Pictures was a fake. They never legally owned any rights to *Captain Harlock* and certainly couldn't license the property to anyone, resulting in Eternity's comic adaptation technically being unauthorized. Once Toei, the legal owner of *Captain Harlock* caught wind of this, the comic was forcefully put to an end. Surprisingly, Toei allowed Eternity to complete their current story arc but we're ultimately uninterested in legally licensing the series to them for further comics. The comic would end in August of 1993, with Eternity themselves folding the following year.

変態

[HENTAI / ADULT COMIX]

(aka manga vertigo goes heels to jesus)

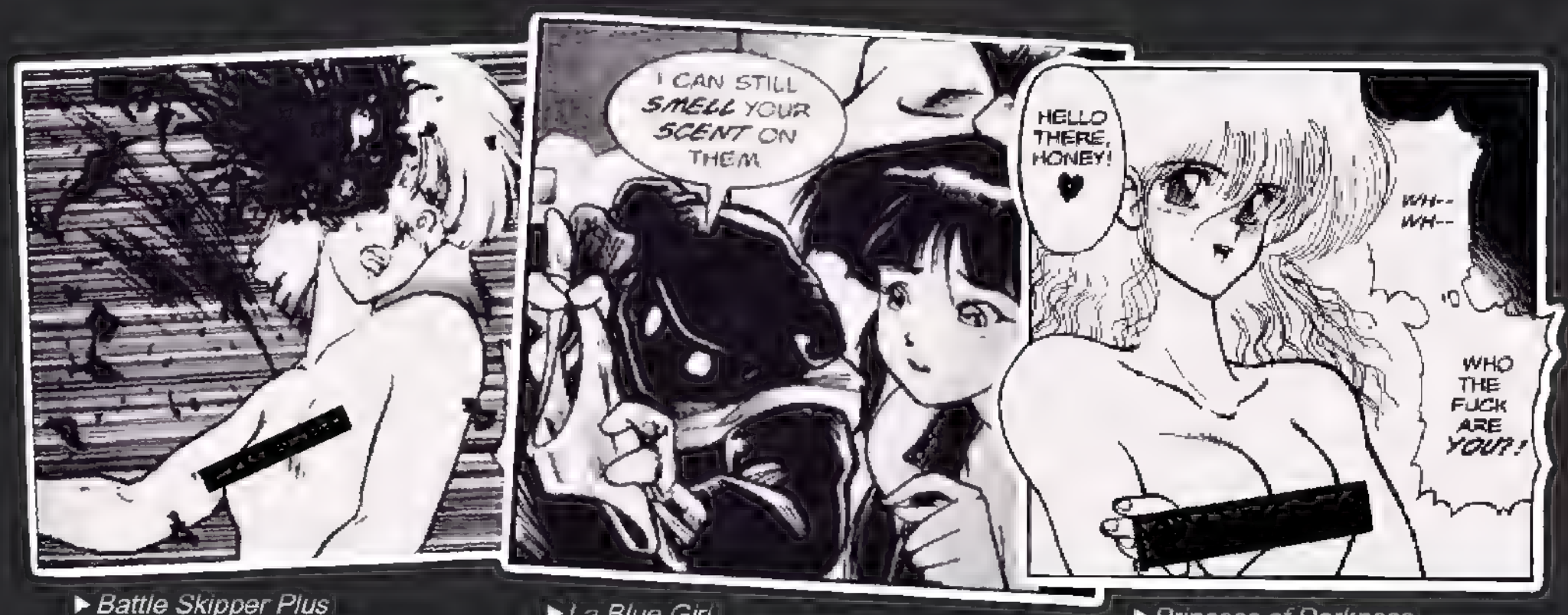
RED HOT MANGA!

Of course, it was only a matter of time until the word 'hentai' was brought up. The art of Japanese erotic animation certainly played a big enough part in early western anime fandom with the likes of *La Blue Girl* and *Kite* being successful releases, and it was no different in the world of comics. Plenty of manga publishers of the 90s such as CPM, Ironcat L.L.C. and Antarctic Press set up divisions for the sole purpose of publishing erotic Japanese comics. Even Studio Proteus entered the market in partnership with Fantagraphics. With plenty of anime and manga brought over at this time perfectly comfortable exploring racy and perverse topics, it was only a matter of time until western publishers took a stab at full on hentai as well.

Many of these early hentai releases were by smaller and alternative publishers who weren't as concerned with primarily appealing to a younger, mainstream audience. As such, comics like these were brought over and localized completely uncensored (albeit with sometimes altered, often comical titles). Publishers didn't stray away from hentai with some of the more extreme content either, such as incest, rape and bestiality.

Some of the earliest examples date back to the early 90s with titles from Antarctic Press such as Kondom's *Bondage Fairies* and Kaori Asano's *Vanity Angel* in 1994 under their Venus Comics imprint. Similar titles would follow from Fantagraphics under their already established Eros Comix brand the following year, including Hiroyuki Utatane's *Countdown*, *Sex Bombs* and Yuichiro Tanuma's *Princess of Darkness*. Since hentai manga was such an unexplored concept in the west at this time, being nowhere near as saturated as Japan, titles like *Bondage Fairies* would even end up outselling their Japanese originals.

Hentai wasn't exempt from the American adaptation treatment either, with adaptations of popular hentai of the time like *La Blue Girl* and *Demon Beast Invasion* from CPM's short-lived Bare Bear Press imprint popping up on store shelves in the mid 90s. These releases wouldn't skimp on the kinkiness either, proudly displaying 'ABSOLUTELY NOT FOR CHILDREN!' on each cover. In fact, an issue of *Demon Beast Invasion* would lead a Dallas comic store clerk to catch a $4000 fine and a year of unsupervised probation in 1999 for "promoting obscenity" after selling the book to an undercover cop.



▶ *Battle Skipper Plus* (Venus Comics, 1994)

▶ *La Blue Girl* (Bare Bear Press, 1996)

▶ *Princess of Darkness* (Eros Comix, 1995)

MANGA ANTHOLOGIES

Although the American comic book format was the standard way of consuming manga throughout the 90's it certainly wasn't the only method explored, with plenty of manga anthology books on store shelves by the end of the decade. In Japan, a fair majority of manga is published on a chapter-by-chapter basis in anthology magazines. Since these anthology magazines and American comic books tackle a similar market, it made sense for publishers to adapt this concept for the west as well.

A rough concept of this was initially seen in manga and anime magazines such as Viz's *Animerica,* which ran from 1992 to 2005. Although a typical monthly news and review magazine, each issue would include one chapter of a manga from Viz's catalogue. Viz would eventually go all in on the idea with *Manga Vizion* in 1995. Proudly billed as "North America's only monthly manga anthology" (a title that would quite quickly become untrue), *Manga Vizion* would compile a single chapter from a variety of different manga series' in each issue. *Manga Vizion* would soon run in tandem with *Pulp,* another outing from Viz focusing on seinen (young adult) comics beginning in 1997. One of Viz's most successful anthology ventures would begin in 1998 with *Animerica Extra.* Envisioned as a companion piece to their *Animerica* publication, *Extra* instead focused solely on manga in the anthology format much like *Manga Vizion* and *Pulp.* While not explicitly a shoujo (girls comics) magazine, *Extra* would procure a strong female readership and show that shoujo manga had a sizable reach in the west. Although at one point being published simultaneously with *Manga Vizion* and *Pulp, Extra* would outlast both magazines, ceasing publication in 2004 with the replacement magazine *Shojo Beat* following soon after.

Newcomer Mixx Entertainment would come along with their *Mixxzine* in 1997. Although Mixx, later known as Tokyopop, were a newly formed company in '97, they were still able to acquire the rights to several manga from Kodonsha's catalogue including *Magic Knight Rayearth, Parasyte,* and even the wildly popular *Sailor Moon* for *Mixxzine.* The magazine has a much more scrappy, somewhat juvenile vibe to its contemporaries of the time. The magazine was even a bit controversial, with some parents not thrilled about titles like *Sailor Moon* being shown alongside the body horror/thriller title *Parasyte.* As such, *Sailor Moon* was swiftly moved to *Smile* in 1998, a sister publication to *Mixxzine* targeted specifically at girls. *Smile* was initially a standard fare girls' magazine with manga sprinkled in before shifting to a dedicated shoujo magazine by early 2000. Both *Mixxzine* and *Smile* would go through a number of format changes in their lifetimes, wrapping up in 2000 and 2002 respectively.

Dark Horse entered the anthology world as well, albeit fairly late in the game, with *Super Manga Blast* in 2000. As explained by Toren Smith in *SMB* issue 1, the idea of a manga anthology from Dark Horse and Studio Proteus had existed since at least 1989, but was put on hold due to the large amount of material to produce and reluctance from retailers to stock books with a high cover price. The idea would stay on the backburner for the coming years until sufficient digital editing techniques came along that could streamline production and keep the cover price to a low $4.95, in line with Viz's manga anthologies at the time. Stories included ranged from Mohiro Kitoh's *Shadow Star* to Kenichi Sonada's *Cannon God Exaxxion* and the very popular *Oh My Goddess!.* Some of Proteus' earliest publications such as *What's Michael* and *3x3 Eyes* were reprinted in *Super Manga Blast* as well. The magazine would last for 59 issues up to 2006 and would even experiment with an unflipped, right-to-left format in its later years.

The TOKYOPOP® Revolution

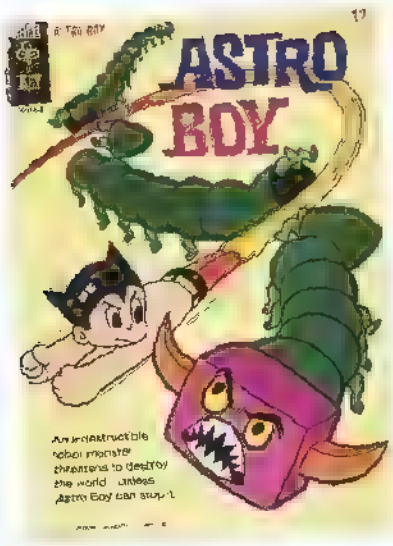
At the turn of the century, the world of manga publishing in the west would be flipped on its head by one publisher, known as Tokyopop. Initially known as Mixx, the company was founded in 1997 and spent the 90's experimenting with a number of different projects, predominately focusing on their previously mentioned *MixxZine* and *Smile* anthologies. Along with these magazines, Mixx would also publish their manga as stand-alone comic book issues and graphic novels dubbed 'pocket manga'. Their number of publications was fairly sparse at this time, consisting of their main five Kodansha licenses found in *Mixxzine (Sailor Moon, Magic Knight Rayearth, Parasyte, Ice Blade* and *Harlem Beat),* and a handful of stand-alone titles such as *Gundam Wing* and *Cardcaptor Sakura.*

The label 'Tokyopop' was initially used solely for marketing, but the company would eventually change its name from Mixx to Tokyopop in 2003. Tokyopop would experiment with their pocket manga and comic book formats until 2002, when they introduced their '100% Authentic Manga' line – graphic novels printed in their original Japanese right-to-left format with the original Japanese sound effects. Tokyopop were the first in the west to employ this strategy, which could keep costs of each book down to a respectable $9.99 USD, whereas comparable graphic novels from the likes of Viz and Dark Horse could range from $13 to $15 USD. This also led to less grief from the original Japanese publishers, as they didn't need to worry about artwork being mirrored and looking wonky as a result. It's said this decision was made to stay faithful to the Japanese originals, but in reality it was almost certainly a cost-cutting measure. The 100% Authentic Manga line would launch with nine titles, including *Marmalade Boy, Chobits* and *Cowboy Bebop*. Funnily enough, despite Tokyopop being the name most associated with bringing this format to the west, the company was still officially known as Mixx at this point. During this time, Tokyopop also experimented with releasing these titles as standard comic books printed in the right-to-left format, though these were phased out quite quickly.

By 2004, the company was publishing hundreds of titles and had a 50% market share of manga in the U.S. Due to Tokyopop's success with this format, many other publishers would choose to standardize their manga in a similar manner in line with the Japanese originals. These other publishers would begin to eat away at Tokyopop's market share and gradually slow their growth rate, with their market share shrinking to 20% by 2011. The growing amount of competition along with a number of failed business ventures, such as their attempt to break into the anime market, would eventually take a toll on Tokyopop. Major changes took place throughout 2008 and 2009, with the company laying off an estimated 40% of their American workforce due to continuously dwindling sales. 2009 also saw the loss of their Kodonsha licenses, leaving a plethora of their manga releases incomplete. Perhaps the final nail in the coffin would come in 2011 when Borders, a large American book retailer and Tokyopop's largest customer, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. With unpaid debts and the loss of a major retailer, Tokyopop would soon close its American operations in April of 2011. The company would eventually relaunch in 2015, but their presence in the western manga market pales in comparison to their heyday. Despite this, their impact on standardizing the market is evidently still felt today.

*(Print ad for *www.Tokyopop.com* dated 2000)

a (condensed) timeline



Area
and M
Viz/Ecl

Pre-Manga
Astro Boy
Gold Key Comics

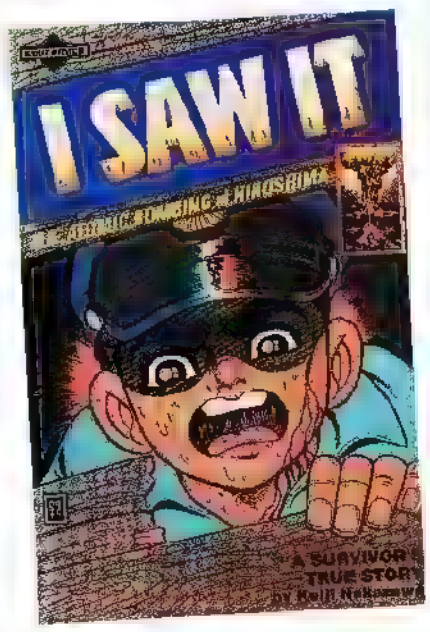
Barefoot Gen
Project Gen

Golgo 13
Lead Publishing

Lone
and G
First Co

Earliest Origins
The Loyal Bandits
World Tribune

I Saw It
EduComics



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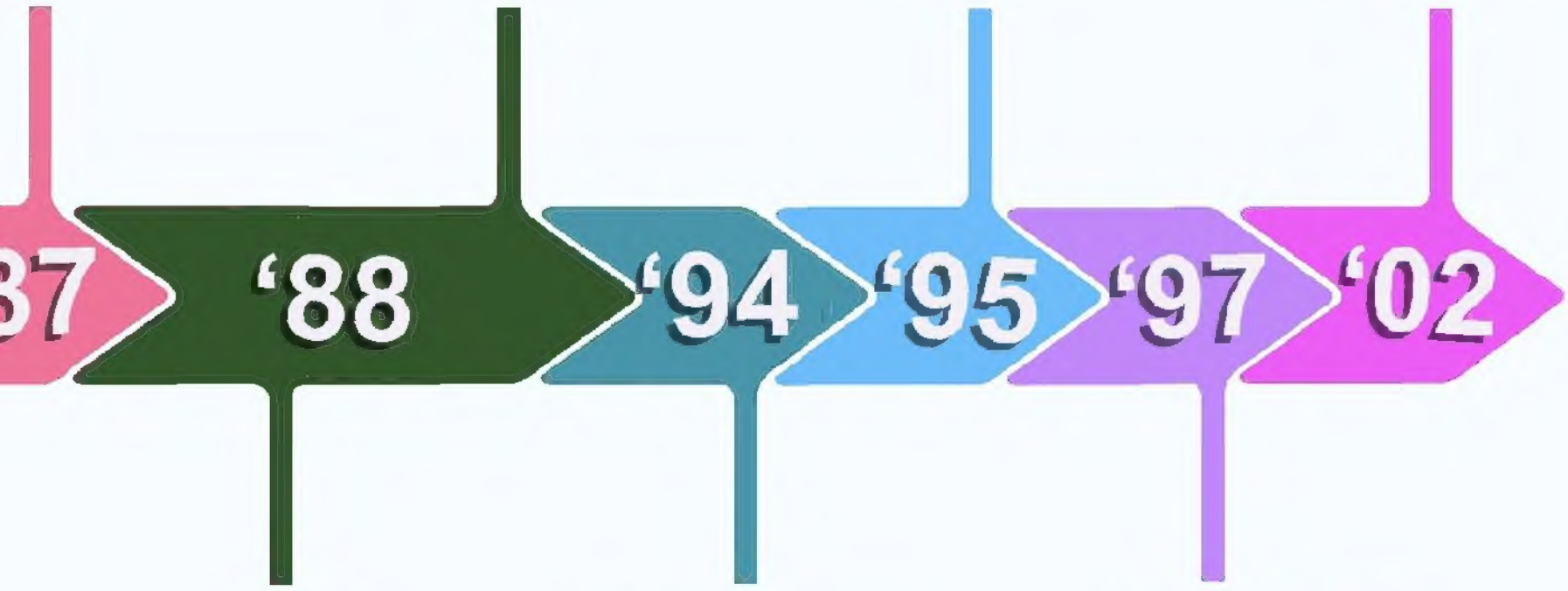
First Titles from
Dark Horse/
Proteus

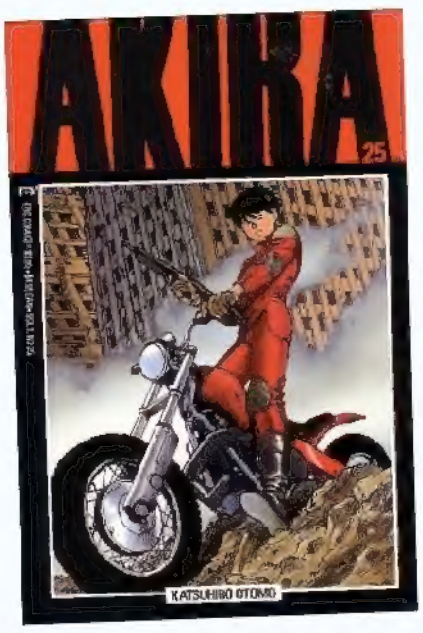
First Manga Anthology
Manga Vizion

Tokopop 100%
Authentic Manga



ics

Akira
Epic Comics



First Hentai titles from
Antarctic Press/
Eros Comix

Tokyopop Origins
Mixxzine

Along with excerpts from my own comic/magazine collection, research for this zine was also done with the following sources:

"Globalizing Comic Books from Below: How Manga Came to America"
Leonard Rifas. p 138-171. International Journal of Comic Art, v. 6, no. 2 (Fall 2004)

"The Hadashi no Gen Project"
Alan Gleason, swet.jp

"Total Eclipse"
total-eclipse.kwakk.info

"Dark Horse Comics Aquires Manga Production Company Studio Proteus"
darkhorse.com (press release)

"Captain Harlock: The Machine People, 1993"
Tim Eldred, timeldred.com

"The History of Hentai Manga - An Expressionist Examination of Eromanga"
Kimi Rito, Fakku Books

"Full Circle: The Unofficial History of Mixxzine"
Adam "OMEGA" Arnold, animefringe.com

"Dreamland Japan - Writings on Modern Manga"
Frederik L. Schodt, Stone Bridge Press

Assorted Notes

- Massive thanks to Leonard Rifas for kindly responding to my email and answering questions I had for him

- Page 4 mentions *The Loyal Bandits* in World Tribune. Credit for this discovery goes to comics scholar Leonard da Sá who unearthed strips #141 and #142 as mentioned in *Globalizing Comic Books From Below.* I just happened to find earlier strips out of basically pure luck from sifting through available archives of World Tribune

- The condensed timeline section mentions *Golgo 13* from Lead Publishing, which I didnt mention anywhere else. Frankly, this is because I couldn't find much info and what i could find wasn't too interesting. Basically, it was advertising for a Golgo 13 video game